

2016-2017

ISSUE 9.4

HAS SEPSIS MET ITS MATCH?



A FAMILY TAKES ON ALZHEIMER'S

EVMS

MAGAZINE

A Black & White Issue

What's behind the lack of
black males in medicine and
what are we doing about it?



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DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

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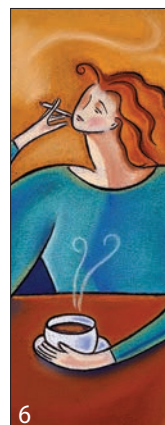


A Black & White Issue

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page 12

departments



- 4 Picture This
- 5 Rounds
- 9 Vision Quest
- 10 Old School
- 11 Off Campus
- 20 Alumni Connections
- 22 My Story
- 23 In Focus

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In the previous issue of EVMS Magazine, we paid tribute to surgeon L.D. Britt, MD, MPH. Dr. Britt is Chair of Surgery at EVMS who was honored last year as the only Virginia physician elected to the National Academy of Medicine.

He also happens to be African-American. When Dr. Britt attended medical school in the 1970s, he had few African-American classmates. No one expected that the number of black men enrolled in medical school today would still be about the same as it was when Dr. Britt graduated.

African-Americans account for about 13 percent of the U.S. population but only about 6 percent of all physicians. And twice as many black women are entering medical school as black men. What is behind the lack of black males in medicine? Our cover story on page 12 explores the reasons — as well as the ways EVMS is tackling this important national issue.

Last year, Paul Marik, MBBCh, Professor of Internal Medicine and Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, took on another important issue, this one with global ramifications. On page 5, read about the astounding results of Dr. Marik's new lifesaving treatment for sepsis.

Lifesaving is also how some patients might describe Western Tidewater Free Clinic. Not only does this safety-net clinic provide compassionate care to the unemployed and working poor in Western Tidewater, it is a vital training site for EVMS students and residents. On page 9, discover how the clinic helps EVMS live up to our community-focused vision.

Please know that we consider serving the healthcare needs of our friends and neighbors to be an honor and privilege. Thank you for standing with EVMS in this meaningful endeavor.

Sincerely,

Richard V. Homan, MD

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HOLY SMOKE!

The effects of first-, second-, and third-hand smoke

THIRD-HAND SMOKE

Toxic tobacco residue from smoking that clings to furniture, walls, car interiors, clothing, skin and hair.



Skin and Hair



Clothing



Car Interiors



Furnishings, Carpets and Walls

Most people know that smoking — known as first-hand smoke — is the leading preventable cause of death. The danger of second-hand smoke is why smoking was banned in public buildings. Now, research shows that third-hand smoke might be just as dangerous.

Learn more at evms.edu/digitalmagazine.

For information on how to quit smoking, call 1.800.QUIT.NOW.

SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Smoke that's either exhaled by a smoker or released from the end of a burning cigarette.



In 2016, it became illegal in Virginia for a person to smoke in a motor vehicle with a child under age 8.

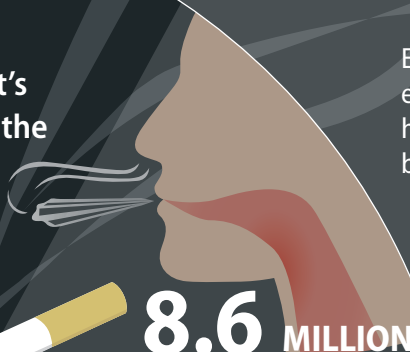
Babies and children can be harmed because they breathe in toxic chemicals when they crawl on floors, sit in cars or are held by adults who smoke.



8% of children age 3–11 and 17% of children age 12–19 live in a home where someone smokes inside.

FIRST-HAND SMOKE

Smoke that's inhaled by the smoker.



8.6 MILLION

people suffer a serious illness caused by smoking such as cancer of the mouth and throat.

Even relatively brief exposure can trigger a heart attack, says a report by the Institute of Medicine.



40,000

deaths are caused by second-hand smoke each year.



Pets are at risk because the chemicals from smoke stay in their fur or feathers.



250+

chemicals are contained in third-hand smoke.





Has sepsis met its match?

New treatment may save millions around the world

Sepsis, an infection that kills millions worldwide each year and is the third leading cause of death in the United States, may have finally met its match.

Paul Marik, MBBCh, the EVMS Foundation Distinguished Professor in Internal Medicine, Professor of Internal Medicine and Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, believes he has developed a cure for the life-threatening infection. His innovative treatment breakthrough – a product of medical intuition and serendipity – promises to revolutionize sepsis care worldwide and produce results that are nothing short of astonishing.

Sepsis kills more than 250,000 people in the U.S. annually and is responsible for eight million deaths globally each year. It is the leading cause of death among hospitalized patients.

“Dr. Marik has developed a brilliant and elegantly simple hypothesis in the treatment of sepsis,” says Richard Homan, MD, President and Provost of EVMS and Dean of the School of Medicine. “The implications of the findings are profound and, if replicated, may transform the treatment of sepsis worldwide.”

As a critical-care physician and head of the general intensive care unit (GICU) at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, Dr. Marik used to be locked in a life-and-death struggle with sepsis. Despite his efforts,

one to two people under his care died each week from the disease.

That all changed unexpectedly Jan. 5, 2016.

The breakthrough came as Dr. Marik struggled to save a woman dying from overwhelming sepsis. He had recently read about vitamin C as a potential treatment for sepsis, and he recalled that steroids, a common treatment for sepsis, might work well in concert with the vitamin C.

Aware that both were safe and would not harm the patient, he gave her the vitamin C and steroid combination intravenously.

Within hours, his patient was recovering. Two days later she was well enough to leave the ICU.

Dr. Marik and his colleagues were astonished. “We said, ‘What just happened?’”

In the following days they used the combination therapy on two more patients seemingly destined to die of sepsis. Twice more

“We haven’t seen a patient die of sepsis since we began using the combination therapy a year ago,” Dr. Marik says. “We have completely changed the natural history of sepsis.”

— Paul Marik, MBBCh

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

EVMS scientist wins two grants that will fund smoking research

The impact of smoking is the focus of two research grants recently awarded to Andrew Plunk, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and a researcher in the Community Health and Research division of EVMS Pediatrics.

A three-year, \$504,592 grant awarded by the Healthy Homes Technical Studies Program of HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) will fund the study, "Assessing the Impact of Smoke-Free

Public Housing on Smoking Behavior, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Third-Hand Smoke, Other Tobacco Use and Smoking-Related Disparities."

A new HUD rule that took effect

One important aspect of our research involves engaging the community to better understand how smoke-free housing should be implemented."

Andrew Plunk, PhD, MPH

Feb. 3 will require public housing developments, where smoking is more prevalent than in the general population,

to provide a smoke-free environment for their residents by August 2018. The EVMS study, led by co-principal investigators Dr. Plunk and Paul Harrell, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics,

has the potential to greatly inform policy and practice nationwide, Dr. Plunk says. "There hasn't been much research done on these policies," he says, "so we'll have a lot of new opportunities to advance science. One important aspect of our research involves engaging the community to better understand how smoke-free housing

should be implemented."

In December, Dr. Plunk also received funding for his role as site investigator for "Smoking, Suicide and Mental Health: Using Policy Change to Probe Causality." Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the three-year study will be conducted by researchers at EVMS and Washington University in St. Louis. Their previous research has shown that strengthening state tobacco-control policies corresponds to reductions in suicide risk. The new study will examine whether smoking is a contributing cause for suicide and more proximal adverse mental-health outcomes. □



David Darrow, MD, DDS

EVMS professor elected President of SENTAC

David Darrow, MD, DDS, Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, was elected President of the Society for Ear, Nose and Throat Advances for Children (SENTAC) at its annual meeting recently in Orlando.

SENTAC is a nonprofit, service-oriented society founded in 1973 that's devoted to research and advancement of the treatment of ear, nose and throat maladies in children.

Dr. Darrow also served for 13 years on the executive committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, including terms as its Chair and Program Chair. □

New skin cancer program keeps patients closer to home

Sentara Healthcare and EVMS are working together to create a new program to treat skin cancer.

The Sentara-EVMS Cutaneous Cancer Program will focus on various areas, including lymphoma that occurs in the skin. Currently, local patients with cutaneous T-cell lymphoma would have to travel to Maryland or North Carolina for treatment.

“This level of care doesn’t exist in Hampton Roads,” says Abby Van Voorhees, MD, Chair and Professor of

Dermatology. “Being able to offer this type of service for these patients closer to home will be quite meaningful in their care.”

The program will also target those who are at high risk for melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers like squamous cell and basal cell, which are often seen in patients who’ve had an organ transplantation. Dr. Van Voorhees says a lead physician will be in place by summer 2017. □

AAMC selects EVMS-led team for project to improve community health

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently selected EVMS as one of only eight U.S. institutions to participate in the three-year workshop series, Building a Systems Approach to Community Health and Health Equity for Academic Medical Centers. The AAMC chose EVMS for the partnership-based project from about 40 applications.

The EVMS team is led by Cynthia Romero, MD (MD ’93), an EVMS-Sentara Endowed Chair for Academic Leadership Advancement, family physician and Director of the M. Foscue Brock Institute for Community and Global Health at EVMS.

Other team members include:

- **Mekbib Gameda**, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at EVMS
- **Kaethe Ferguson, EdD, MS**, Toy Savage Endowed Professor in Pediatrics, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director of Community Health and Research, a division of EVMS Pediatrics
- **Elsie Harold Lans, EdD**, Senior Director of Student Support Services for Norfolk Public Schools



Cynthia Romero, MD (MD ’93)

- **Demetria Lindsay, MD**, Director of the Norfolk Department of Public Health
- **Grace Hines, MBA**, Corporate Vice President for System Integration for Sentara Healthcare

“Our goal,” Dr. Romero says, “is to allow EVMS to work strategically with our community partners to use education, research and clinical care to transform the systems where our patients live, learn, work and play to prioritize health and wellness. □

Here’s what you’ve missed recently in EVMS’ digital newsroom, the Pulse:

- Six aging myths debunked
- Why more people are freezing their eggs
- Onelife Fitness teams up with EVMS
- Post-menopausal treatment eases discomfort
- Three warning signs of prostate cancer

Check your EVMS Pulse daily.



Read these stories and more at evms.edu/pulse.

Young student finds inspiration in family and volunteer work

Don't tell this EVMS student he can't do something. There's a good chance he'll prove you wrong.

At only 21 years old, David Neuberger is about to complete his second year of medical school. He was 16 when he graduated from high school and only 19 when he received a degree in chemical engineering at the University of Alabama.

Being the youngest of his peers hasn't stopped him from achieving his goals. "As the youngest of four kids," Mr. Neuberger says, "I was always very competitive with my siblings, and they motivated me to do my best in every aspect of life. I don't let my age define me or hold me back."

As for medicine, his fascination began at an early age. "I was intrigued by my mother's prosthetic arm and how it worked." That inspired him to volunteer at places where he could help people with a variety of disabilities. "That work was my first true exposure to the medical field, and it was when I realized that becoming a doctor is what I wanted to do with my life."

It also inspired his field of interest: sports medicine. "I've always been fascinated with how the body moves and works the way it does, so sports medicine is the perfect fit for me."

When it came time to choose a medical school, he didn't take long to realize EVMS also was the perfect fit. "I loved the people at EVMS when I interviewed here," he says, "and I knew that EVMS was going to be a supportive environment with a great group of motivated students."

He was impressed, too, by the school's commitment to community service and the opportunities it could provide. "I



David Neuberger, second-year EVMS MD student

really loved being able to be hands on with patients my second semester in medical school, as well as volunteering at the HOPES Free Clinic so early."

While accomplishing so much so young has been a challenge, Mr. Neuberger says it's been worth every second of hard work. "I wouldn't trade my experiences for anything." □

Lifesaving treatment for sepsis could save millions Continued from page 5

the patients recovered. Dr. Marik and his team quickly adopted the combination therapy as standard practice.

Despite the continued successes, Dr. Marik found that many colleagues were skeptical. For one thing, pharmaceutical companies have conducted more than 100 clinical trials and spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the last 25 years in an unsuccessful search for a sepsis treatment.

And then there is vitamin C. It has been purported as a cure or treatment for

a wide range of conditions — with little scientific evidence of its effectiveness.

To strengthen his case and to allay his own apprehensions that this was too good to be true, Dr. Marik worked with colleagues to study the interaction in a lab setting. Two separate biological tests proved that vitamin C and steroids were effective against sepsis — but only when used together.

A year after Dr. Marik's chance discovery, sepsis has become a controllable infection in his ICU. Other hospitals

and ICUs are beginning to adopt the combination treatment.

Dr. Marik's findings are published in CHEST, the journal of the American College of Chest Physicians.

"We haven't seen a patient die of sepsis since we began using the combination therapy a year ago," Dr. Marik said one year to the day after treating the first patient. "We have completely changed the natural history of sepsis." □



To learn more about Dr. Marik's breakthrough treatment, visit evms.edu/pulse.



**“If they’re not healthy,
they’re not working”**

More than
4,000 patients
received care
in over 100,000
visits.

EVMS helps Western Tidewater Free Clinic serve its neighbors

In 2013, Chester Hart Jr. retired from a long career in healthcare administration. Or so he thought.

“In 2016, I had a calling to come here and apply,” says Mr. Hart, who was a senior executive with Sentara Healthcare when he retired. “Then I had the honor to join this committed team that’s dedicated to serving our neighbors.” The team operates Western Tidewater Free Clinic in Suffolk; he is its Executive Director.

Mr. Hart, also a member of the EVMS Board of Visitors, learned what the rest of his staff already knew: the clinic’s mission is contagious. Pamela Witt, RN, BSN, served as a volunteer nurse when the clinic opened in 2007; she’s now Director of Clinical Services. April Foster, DO (Family and Community Medicine Residency ’14), MPH, rotated through the clinic during her EVMS residency; she was its most recent Medical Director.

“I was given the privilege of serving this community,” Dr. Foster says. “The medical

and social issues of these patients are vast, but this clinic stands as a source of light for them. I loved serving this population. But without the relationship between the clinic and EVMS, I would not have been in this position.”

“Our clinic is the community’s only safety-net provider for these patients. More than one-third of them are the working poor.”

— Chester Hart Jr

In fact, an EVMS relationship helped establish the clinic. Teresa Babineau, MD (MD ’90), a former faculty member who lived in Suffolk, collaborated with a few other healthcare professionals to bring a free clinic to Western Tidewater, then one of only two Virginia localities without the service.

EVMS remains involved by having Family Medicine residents, MD students and now Physician Assistant students rotate through the clinic under the supervision of Keith Claussen, DO,

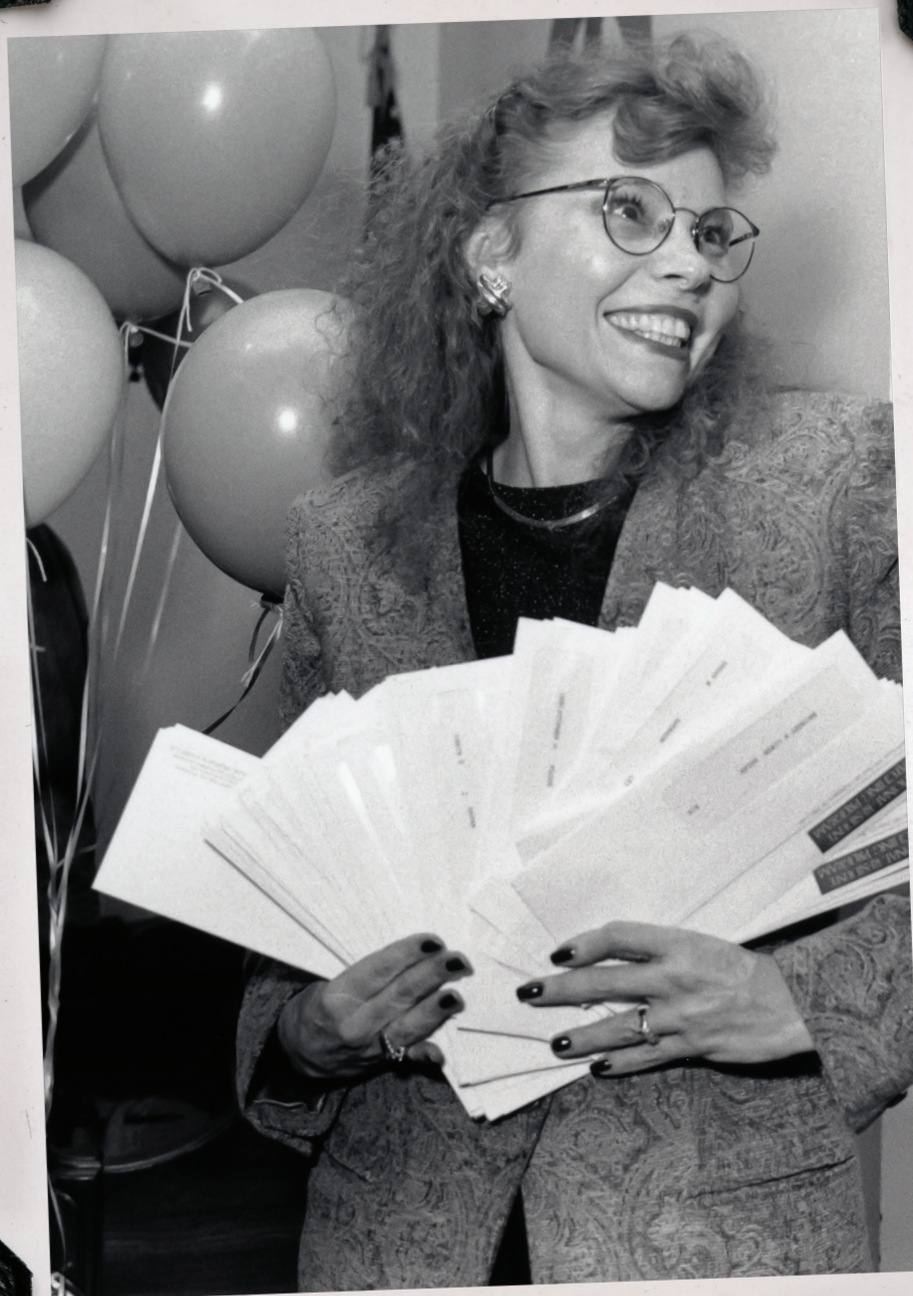
Assistant Professor of Family and Community Medicine. Since 2011, Obici Healthcare Foundation has funded this training program, formally known as “EVMS Continuity of Care for Western Tidewater.” In January, the foundation also began funding two half-days of care at the clinic each month by health providers from EVMS Endocrinology.

As the clinic nears its 10-year anniversary, the need keeps growing. From starting with two-and-a-half paid staff members, the clinic now employs 23. Volunteers have donated in excess of 102,000 hours.

More than 4,000 patients have received care in over 100,000 visits. Eighty-one percent of patients are older than 40; 58 percent earn an annual income of \$24,250 or less for a family of four.

“Our clinic is the community’s only safety-net provider for these patients,” Mr. Hart says. “More than one-third of them are the working poor. If they’re not healthy, they’re not working.” □

A Perfect Match



During Match Day in March 1996, former Student Affairs staff member Diana Lambert took great delight in handing out the envelopes that proclaimed where EVMS' graduating MD students matched for their residencies.

As is the custom at medical schools, during this year's Match Day held March 17, members of the EVMS Class of 2017 opened their residency-match envelopes the same time as the rest of the nation's fourth-year students.

Don't miss photos from Match Day 2017 in the next edition of EVMS Magazine, which publishes in May.



Relaxing in the Rink

Roller skating
helps faculty member
find work/life
balance.

On campus, Kimberly Salkey, MD (Dermatology Residency '06), Associate Professor of Dermatology, spends time treating patients and teaching students. Off campus, you might find her rolling around a local skating rink, her children whirling along with her.

How did you get interested in roller skating?

Growing up in Virginia Beach, I have fond memories of elementary-school skating parties as the social events of the year. It was during that time that I developed basic skating skills and began to appreciate the joy and camaraderie skating can provide.

I took opportunities to go skating with friends during college and medical school. Skating then fell off my radar until about two years ago when I was looking for a fun activity to do with my children on a rainy, cold February afternoon. My husband, two children and I headed to our local roller rink. We had a great time and have been weekly regulars at the Saturday morning session ever since.

What do you enjoy most about it?

I enjoy the freedom that comes with speeding along the rink floor with the wind in my face. That, in addition to the pop music that is pumped into the rink, makes it easy to leave behind all the other concerns on my mind. On top of that, skating provides a great opportunity for my family to be together despite having all different skill levels.

As a personal philosophy, I am a strong believer in work/life balance. Having an outlet to relax my body and mind makes me a better teacher and physician.

What are you most passionate about in your work at EVMS?

I love having the opportunity to educate my patients on a daily basis, in addition to the teaching I do with our residents, medical students and the MPA students. My passion for teaching also extends into my focus on community service, where providing care and education for underserved populations is critical.

Why have you decided to set down roots at EVMS?

Although my educational endeavors have allowed for travel all around the country, there's no place like home. This area has tons to offer in terms of education and entertainment for my young family. In addition, the genuinely cooperative spirit of EVMS is like no other. □



To learn more about Dr. Salkey's skating, visit evms.edu/digitalmagazine.



A Black & White Issue

What's behind the
lack of black males in
medicine and what
are we doing about it?



Looking out over a sea of medical students, you can't ignore that their coats aren't the only things that are white. Overwhelmingly, so are their faces.

By most measures, Gerry Ovide is a typical medical student. Inspired to pursue medicine following the death of a loved one, he is now a third-year medical student busy rotating through clinical departments, preparing for his medical licensure exam and working hard to realize his dream of becoming a physician.

But in the classroom and in his chosen profession, Mr. Ovide stands out — he is a black man.

"As a kid, I wanted to become a basketball player," he says. "That is a sentiment that I feel many African-American children have. They see successful black male athletes, musicians and other entertainers, and they aspire to be like them."

Often young black males never consider medicine as a career, in part, Mr. Ovide says, because of the scarcity of role models. "How often do they see black physicians?"

The national statistics are stark. Just ask Marcus Martin, MD. When he graduated from EVMS in 1976, he was the only African-American in the school's inaugural MD class. He saw himself at the forefront of what he expected would be a growing supply of African-American physicians. Forty years later, that number is virtually unchanged.

"I was startled," says Dr. Martin, Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Virginia, recalling when he first saw the totals in the 2015 report "Altering the Course: Black Males in Medicine," published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

In 1978, 542 black males entered medical schools across the country. Over the intervening 38 years, that number increased by only 39 students. In 2016, the total number of black males nationwide was 581 out of 21,030 students.

This glaring lack of black male students stands out in a side-by-side comparison of males and female applicants. In 2014, two black females applied for every one black male applicant, according to the AAMC report. In every other ethnic group, male applicants dominate.

This dearth of black male applicants becomes even more critical with population growth and shifting patient demographics. By 2025, the AAMC predicts a shortage of as many as 90,000 physicians of all ethnicities.

Devon Preston, MD (MD '13, Internal Medicine Residency '16), is a black physician now completing a fellowship in asthma and immunology at the University of Virginia. As a youth, he saw family members shun medical care because no black physicians practiced in their rural southwest Virginia community.

"Having [a doctor] who looks like you helps you develop a level of trust," Dr. Preston says.

The lack of black male physicians impacts the well-being of communities nationwide and exacerbates the health inequities that persist in the African-American population, according to Lawrence Sanders Jr., MD, President of the National Medical Association.

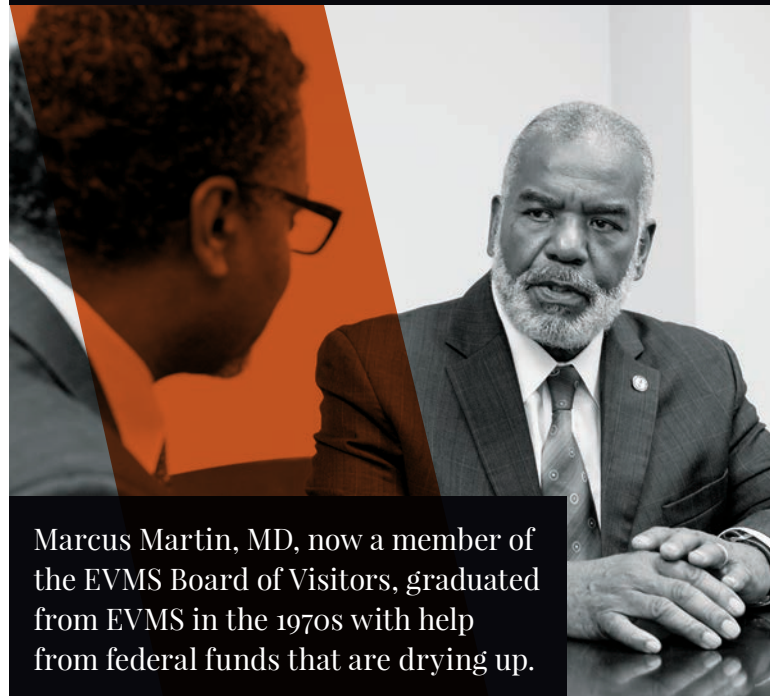
"As a nation, our capacity to improve health for all Americans depends on our commitment to ensuring access to high-quality services in every neighborhood," Dr. Sanders wrote in the AAMC report. "The downward trend in the number of African-American men entering medical school threatens our ability to achieve equitable access across all American neighborhoods."

Dr. Martin, also a member of the EVMS Board of Visitors, co-edited a book on the importance of a diverse workforce and cultural




“What was fortunate for me is somebody made me aware of [career] opportunities. Because of those experiences, I decided I wanted to go into medicine.”

Thomas Kimble, MD



Marcus Martin, MD, now a member of the EVMS Board of Visitors, graduated from EVMS in the 1970s with help from federal funds that are drying up.



Feelings of isolation among black medical students are high. Current students Gerry Ovide, Jelani Williams and Joshua Ononuju chose to room together, in part, to battle the solitude.

competency. In the preface, the writers agree that excellence in the medical workforce is not possible without diversity.

“A growing body of research shows that a diverse workforce is more capable of relating to patients, detecting and addressing health disparities, and overcoming the challenges that face healthcare,” they write. “Diversity accelerates our delivery of quality care to all people.”

There is no shortage of educated black males. During the last 40 years as black male enrollment in medical schools remained virtually unchanged nationwide, the number of black males with at least a bachelor’s degree more than tripled, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In fact, more black males are in college today than ever before.

But when the average medical student graduates with \$180,000 in debt, it’s no surprise that many youth who might otherwise consider medicine instead choose the less expensive option. “Four years to get an education and get a job,” Dr. Martin says. “I think that’s key.”

Dr. Martin attended EVMS with help from a National Health Corps Scholarship. Today, similar federal resources are drying up.

“Many of the national programs that support medical students have seen their funding fall over the years,” says Mekbib Gameda, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at EVMS and President of the Virginia Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

“Many of the national programs that support medical students have seen their funding fall over the years.”

To make matters worse, the persistent economic inequalities for many African-Americans can bring unintended academic challenges. Studies indicate that a disproportionate number of young black men live in underserved communities where they may attend underperforming public schools. In that setting, they face a greater likelihood of missing out on test preparation and high-quality advising that can help steer them toward medicine as a career.

The AAMC report demonstrates that public perceptions and negative images of black men also may adversely influence their educational and career decisions.

“Interviewees explained that the combination of frequent negative media portrayals and lower expectations for males, specifically black young boys and men, directly and indirectly perpetuates stereotypes and systemic biases,” cites the AAMC report.

Public school educators understand that an early focus on career opportunities prepares students for academically demanding professions like medicine. Virginia Beach City Public Schools host an annual African American Male Summit, which focuses in part on college readiness. In Virginia Beach and other city schools across the region, teachers and guidance counselors have career conversations with youngsters as early as third grade.

“We think that when you start showing them what can be done at a younger age, you’re really giving them more opportunities in life,” says James Pohl, PhD, Executive Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning in Virginia Beach.

Thomas Kimble, MD, Associate Dean for Admissions and Enrollment at EVMS, didn’t have that opportunity at such a young age, but he did have formative experiences as a teen.

As a high-school sophomore and junior, he attended summer-long programs at the University of North Carolina and Duke University. Both programs targeted minority students.

“What was fortunate for me is somebody made me aware of these opportunities,” Dr. Kimble says. “Because of those experiences, I decided I wanted to go into medicine.”

In his new capacity overseeing MD admissions at EVMS, Dr. Kimble is eager to return the favor. For instance, EVMS is looking to partner with local high schools and undergraduate institutions to develop a “pyramid of mentoring.”

“We’ll have the undergraduates mentoring the high school students, our medical students mentoring the undergraduates and our faculty mentoring the medical students and overseeing everything,” he says.

EVMS also is revising its admissions criteria to include a more holistic approach for evaluating potential students.

“Sometimes,” Dr. Kimble says, “people from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have done well on standardized exams or have the highest GPA, but we see other things that point us to their doing well — such as exposure to medicine or overcoming obstacles in their lives.”

EVMS is working to strengthen its BS/MD program, a relationship with several undergraduate institutions where students can earn guaranteed acceptance into EVMS as a college sophomore. Dr. Kimble’s vision is to create on-campus experiences for these future medical students while they are still completing college.

A pre-matriculation program is also in the works, so that students arrive at EVMS before classes begin to help them acclimate to the campus. Because of the shortage of black males, feelings of isolation are a real concern for students, Dr. Kimble says.

Anton Quist, MD, MPH (MD ‘13), can relate. He vividly recalls his reaction when he arrived at medical school and realized he had few black male colleagues.

"I was very disappointed," Dr. Quist says. Mr. Ovide, Mr. Williams and fellow student Joshua Ononuju chose to room together, in part, to battle the solitude.

It's not the fault of the youths. It's our fault," says James Willie, MD, a retired obstetrician. "We have to bring them in."

For Dr. Willie, the key to attracting more black males to medicine is encouragement from a respected adult.

Dr. Willie found his motivation from a black physician in his hometown of Smithfield, N.C. "I sort of idolized him," says Dr. Willie, a founding member of the

medicine. He took an interest in my potential and challenged me to aim higher and dream bigger," recalls Mr. Williams, now a third-year medical student at EVMS. "He became an early mentor and motivator, and had it not been for him, I might not have chosen medicine."

For L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, his early influence was a highly respected surgeon in his community. Since then, the Harvard-trained surgeon has gone on to great things, including recently earning election to the National Academy of Medicine, the first faculty member from EVMS to do so.

"Most people chose their profession because someone influenced them," says

sounding board for young men at Fort Jackson Army Base in Columbia, S.C., where he is Chief of Preventive Medicine.

"Whenever I am asked to counsel students," he says, "I try to give them time and explain to them what the medical field entails and try to gauge their interest and support them in any way I can. To me, it's a special opportunity when someone asks for advice."

EVMS students also have taken it upon themselves to make a difference. Many volunteer with the school's medical-adventures program in which they interact with an ethnically mixed group of high school students interested in medicine.

Whether it's more pipeline programs, better outreach from medical schools or face-to-face encouragement of youngsters, the nation needs to do whatever it takes to educate more black physicians, says Derwin Gray, MD, a member of the EVMS Board of Visitors and father of a 2016 EVMS graduate.

"Not only is it good to have diversity in medical education," he says, "it's the right thing to do."

For a handful of young black males in Philadelphia, their career aspirations recently have grown beyond athletes, musicians and entertainers. They now look up to and admire their friend: third-year EVMS medical student Gerry Ovide.

In between breaks in his studies, Mr. Ovide sees his friends when he returns to his hometown and attends his childhood church. During those visits, he has come to understand his own transformation into the role model that so many impressionable young black males never get to see.

"When you realize that you can have a greater impact just by being present," he says, "then you start feeling a little bit of the weight of responsibility to go back and help those who may not have had the same opportunities." □



“It's not the fault of the youths. It's our fault. We have to bring them in.”

James Willie, MD

EVMS faculty who became the first board-certified black obstetrician in Virginia. "He also took a liking to me, and he became a mentor to me."

Others had similar experiences.

Until 10th grade, Jelani Williams "had serious intentions" of becoming an architect. Then, his honors biology teacher encouraged him to consider a new path.

"He strongly urged me to look into

Dr. Britt, the Edward J. Brickhouse Chair in Surgery, Henry Ford Professor of Surgery and Professor and Chair of Surgery. "The earlier you have that influence, the more you prepare your foundation and the greater your chance of being successful."

Dr. Quist is doing his part to ensure that future minority students don't experience the disappointment he faced in medical school. Today, he is a ready



Learn more about this issue at evms.edu/digitalmagazine.

How EVMS Is Helping

EVMS leaders know it takes a multifaceted approach to make the medical and health professions more diverse, says Mekbib Gameda, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion. Below is a sampling of the ways EVMS addresses this issue in the community and on campus.



EVMS Pipeline Efforts

- **Young at Heart:** By volunteering as tutors through this program at P.B. Young, Sr. Elementary School, which serves a local neighborhood that's among the nation's poorest 1 percent, EVMS students act as role models for the schoolchildren.
- **Booker T. Washington Healthcare Careers Exploration Event:** At this annual EVMS-sponsored event, underserved high-school students and their parents learn directly from EVMS faculty and students about the array of healthcare careers available.
- **Medical and Health Specialties Program at Maury High School:** This collaboration between EVMS and Norfolk Public Schools was launched 31 years ago through a grant from the National Institutes of Health to increase diversity in the medical and health professions.
- **Health Sciences Academy at Bayside High School:** EVMS participates in this Virginia Beach City Public Schools program that starts high-school students on various health-oriented curriculum tracks for healthcare careers.
- **Campus Visitation Day:** Minority high-school students and college undergraduates are invited to EVMS' "Enhancing Diversity in Medicine," a day-long program now in its 23rd year, that helps equip attendees with what they need to know to pursue medical school.

- **BS/MD Program at Norfolk State University and Hampton University:** EVMS partners with these historically black universities in southeastern Virginia on joint BS/MD programs.
- **Minority Association of Premedical Students (MAPS):** At Hampton University, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University and the College of William and Mary, this EVMS program offers college students sessions on pathways to careers in health professions, strategies to prepare for medical school, visits and interaction with EVMS students and mentoring by underrepresented minority physicians.
- **Summer Scholars Program:** This mentored 11-week research program provides pre-med students significant research and preceptorship opportunities with EVMS faculty, as well as seminars and advisement on the application process to medical school.

EVMS On-Campus Initiatives

- **Campus-Wide Unconscious Bias Training:** In 2015, this effort to raise awareness of unconscious bias became required training for EVMS faculty, staff, students and the school's Board of Visitors.
- **Mentor Matching Event:** EVMS partners with two organizations that represent the region's African-American physicians — Old Dominion Medical Society and Greater Norfolk Medical Society — whose members

volunteer to mentor minority medical students.

- **Two-Year Medical Master's Program:** This EVMS program was developed in 2015 to enable students who show an aptitude for medicine, but who might have been at an academic disadvantage for reasons beyond their control, to be more competitive when applying for medical schools.
- **Student Proficiency Enhancement Program:** A component of this program gives students who may encounter an adjustment period the opportunity to meet with an academic support-services team early in the semester. A team member will review a completed learning self-assessment to help the student develop plans for optimal study techniques and exam-taking strategies.
- **Building the Next Generation of Academic Physicians:** This regional conference, hosted by EVMS in 2016, is an initiative supported by the Association of American Medical Colleges to enhance diversity among the faculty at academic medical centers. The conference engaged underrepresented minority students in medicine and biomedical sciences, as well as residents and fellows from institutions in the region. □

■ To help fund scholarships at EVMS for African-American men, please call EVMS Development at 757.965.8500.



*Denille Francis, LPC, ATR-BC,
with son Quinn and husband Christopher.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF STELLAR EXPOSURES

Alumna promotes the healing power of art

Denille Francis, LPC, ATR-BC (ATR '00), is a mental-health services provider and the mother of an 8-year-old boy who has Down syndrome. In both roles, she has witnessed how creating art has the power to heal by strengthening relationships and improving communication.

"Art appears to make it easier for people to find words and begin discussions," says Ms. Francis, who works as clinical director for Family Preservation Services, Virginia Peninsula Region.

She might help children and parents connect, for example, by having them draw pictures, symbols or colorful designs in an art journal that they pass back and forth to spark conversation. Ms. Francis also has used art therapy techniques in staff training to promote self-care, such as having staff members reflect on changes in their breathing rates and muscle tension while they create mandalas or other designs.

Art has helped in her own life, too. After Ms. Francis gave birth to her son, Quinn, art eased the anxiety and stress of having a baby with special needs. She has since made art an important part of the family culture and even uses it as a teaching tool with her son (within the bounds of her profession's rules about working with family members). When Quinn was a toddler, she often did full-body tracings of him to teach parts of the body. Now when he traces his own stuffed animals and toys, Ms. Francis uses the pictures to teach him lessons like recognizing shapes and comparing sizes.

"Communication is very hard for my son," says Ms. Francis, a volunteer Director and interim President for the Down Syndrome Association of Hampton Roads. "I have to believe that giving him options through art and using creativity have enriched his life."

Ms. Francis cites the solid academic and clinical foundation she received in EVMS' Art Therapy Program as vital preparation for her advocacy work on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her son inspires her clinical work, and she frequently collaborates with EVMS Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences to promote understanding about Down syndrome among medical students.

"My education at EVMS really solidified my path of lifelong learning," says Ms. Francis. "I want to support the medical professionals coming out of EVMS so that they can be informed about Down syndrome and offer hope and help to families and individuals with the condition. My hope is to destigmatize disabilities and mental health problems by making sure people have current, accurate information and by encouraging compassion." □

Save the Date

2017 EVMS ALUMNI WEEKEND

October 20 – 22, 2017

Celebrating the Classes of 1977, 1982, 1987,
1992, 1997, 2002, 2007 & 2012

classNotes

- **Brendan Stack Jr., MD** (MD '89), Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, is one of two co-editors of *Medical and Surgical Treatment of Parathyroid Diseases: An Evidence Based Approach*, recently published by Springer International Publishing.
- **Brooke Edwards, MD** (Urology Residency '14), has been named chief medical officer of The Urology Group in northern Kentucky. In this role, Dr. Edwards is a key member of the executive team and will play a pivotal role in providing medical oversight, expertise and leadership to ensure the continued delivery of advanced urological care in the tristate.
- **Fuad Bohsali, MD** (MD '13), is currently a hospitalist fellow at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. He is doing research in quality improvement, as well as taking coursework in the school of public health. He presented clinical vignettes at the American College of Physicians (ACP) National Conference in 2015, as well as at the ACP regional conference in 2016.
- **Jennifer Eldridge, MD** (Biomedical Sciences '08, MD '12), joined Lancaster General Health Physicians Family and Maternity Medicine in Lancaster, Pa., after completing her internship and residency at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.
- **Mary Maniscalco-Theberge, MD** (MD '81), was awarded the inaugural American College of Surgeons' Mary Edwards Walker Inspiring Women in Surgery Award. She was recognized for her work as a champion for the advancement of women in surgery and for being an inspiration throughout her career to female surgeons in the Washington, D.C. area.
- **Jonathan Philpott, MD** (MD '94), co-authored the textbook, *Surgical Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation: A Comprehensive Guide to Performing the Cox Maze IV Procedure*. □

Family manages memory loss with help from EVMS

Rentheia Dodson plays a word game at the kitchen table — the one where you find a word in a sea of letters and circle it.

“C-A-Q,” she says, laughing, magnifying glass in one hand, pen in the other. Ren is 87, thin, has short gray hair and a youthful smile. She is looking for “caring” but the diagonals give her trouble.

“Look to the left,” her son, Bill, says. His wife, Heather, has found the word, too, upside down. And they all laugh, Ren most of all, at how long it is taking her.

Ren has Alzheimer’s disease — a new addition to the family since August. And these word games, along with medication, exercise and social activity, are supposed to help slow its progression.

“I don’t know enough about it to say what stage I’m in,” Ren says. “Or if there are stages.”

But Heather jumps in and explains gently but matter-of-factly that they do know what stage she’s in — early — and that her doctor thinks she’s doing very well.

“I’m glad to hear that,” Ren says. She never says Alzheimer’s but instead calls it her “problem.” And sometimes it makes her not want to be around people for fear that they will notice.

At first, she would forget her keys. Then, conversations and days of the week. Heather and Bill brought her in for a series of memory tests at the EVMS Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology. There, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.



Word games are among the tools that may help slow Alzheimer’s disease, which Rentheia Dodson recently learned she has. Here her son, Bill, helps her with a word search.

“It was saddening to hear it,” Bill says. But both he and Heather follow every negative with a positive. “We’re doing all the right things to help mitigate it and to slow this progression.”

Their doctor, Hamid Okhravi, MD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, has helped them balance Ren’s independence with her health.

She lives on her own, drives within a five-mile radius on roads she knows well, goes to the pool, walks and grocery shops.

“I’m very grateful personally to have known about EVMS,” Heather says. “Dr. Okhravi’s bedside manner was amazing. He didn’t rush, was so kind and just gentle with her.”

“He made you feel like we’re going to get through this,” Bill says.

When they’ve had enough of word games, they move to the sunroom to sing together — one of Ren’s favorite activities.

“It just makes me feel good,” Ren says. “It’s like something within your body that you can sing out and feel good about.” She also likes opening her blinds in the morning to let the sunlight in and making sure it finds her plants.



Singing with daughter-in-law Heather makes Rentheia feel good.

“There is no crystal ball,” Heather says, to tell them how the disease will manifest itself in the years to come. But they are optimistic and work through issues as they arise.

Adds Ren: “I think I’m feeling happy that things are going well right now.” □

Featured Physician

HAMID OKHRAVI, MD

*Rosemary Fenton and Garnett Jordan Professorship in Geriatrics and Associate Professor of Internal Medicine
Director, Memory Center at EVMS Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology*



View a video of Rentheia Dodson’s story at evms.edu/digitalmagazine.



Good Works ▲

Students, staff and faculty recently gathered to participate in a donation drive held by EVMS Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. They collected clothes, toiletries and snacks that were given to the homeless.

◀ Air Buds

Holly Williams of 93.7 Bob-FM radio interviewed Jerry Nadler, MD, the Harry H. Mansbach Chair in Internal Medicine, Professor and Chair of Internal Medicine and Vice Dean of Research, at a diabetes screening held at Onelife Fitness in Norfolk. The event celebrated Onelife's fundraising for EVMS' diabetes research.



View more photos and video at
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